

interesting group of people and we know that we are honored to have you here this morning. Thank you for visiting us. We will go on to LB 524, please.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 524 was introduced by Senator Ashford. (Read title.) Introduced on January 22, referred to Business and Labor, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill.

PRESIDENT: Senator Brad Ashford, would you like to talk about your bill, please.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you. Mr. President and members, this bill is one that I have some background in. As a judge on the Commission of Industrial Relations, I was always concerned with the fact that especially in the areas of teacher contracts and teacher negotiations that if there was, in fact, a dispute that arose and the parties couldn't get together that oftentimes a resolution of the dispute would not take place for many months after the school year which was in dispute. And I think this was really an inappropriate practice and, therefore, I have offered LB 524, introduced LB 524 which does a couple of things. First of all, it repeals the Teachers Professional Negotiation Act which was adopted in 1967, essentially to grant to teachers and school districts the authority and right to bargain collectively. The TPNA also had as part of its provision a mediation provision, a mediation process, built into it. LB 524 repeals the TPNA because of the time delay which the TPNA often caused in dispute settlements and puts the mediation process directly into the jurisdiction of the Commission of Industrial Relations. What this will, in effect, do will grant to the commission jurisdiction over teacher disputes earlier, will cause the disputes to be resolved and the cases to go to court if their dispute is not resolved in mediation sooner, and will hopefully result in the problems that have oftentimes plagued school districts where a resolution of a dispute does not take place for a year or a year and a half after the year when the...the year in dispute. LB 524 will save significant time in the resolution of the process, will save money because of that reason, and will hopefully result in, and I believe will result in the settlement of disputes in a much more expeditious and orderly manner. We do not, I would stress, do not do away with the mandatory mediation provisions of the TPNA. We are simply including them in the Commission of Industrial Relations statutes allowing either party to invoke the mediation provisions, and, therefore, we have really the best part of the